

## Knowing for Certain; John's Valedictory

### 1 John 5:13-21

- 1) John is specifically addressing the believers in the church of Ephesus although his letter speaks to all believers at all times because John writes with apostolic authority
- 2) John wants to provide his readers with confidence, thus the emphasis on knowing (7 times) and the direct reference to confidence
- 3) Although John affirms that God hears our prayers and honours them by answering our prayers, the critical proviso is that God answers prayers which are in accordance with His will. For clarity, God is not somehow bound to answer our selfish prayers which serve our own will and self-interest.
- 4) One of our most important prayers is for brothers and sisters who have fallen into sin. God promises that He will hear and answer these prayers (see Job 42:7-9)
- 5) There is sin which leads to death, meaning it will not be forgiven. Dr. Dennis Johnson of Westminster Seminary in California summarizes this issue well when he writes  
*"Of two truths we may be sure: None who commits this unforgivable sin will ever trust in Christ to receive the forgiveness found in Him. And no one who flees to the crucified and risen Son of Man has committed that heinous slander of the Spirit - nor will the Saviour turn away anyone who turns to Him"*
- 6) John's closing to this letter is critical advice for all  
*"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."*

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*"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."*

## Small Group Questions

1. Why does John use the word “know” so many times and then support this notion further by speaking of confidence? How was this certainty important to believers in Ephesus? How is this certainty important to us today?
2. What is the difference between the true faith of “believing” and the empty faith that is without good works; mere “acknowledging” or “knowing about” in the context of Jesus? (read James 2:19)? How is this completely different from the notion of being saved by works?
3. Why is John using the present tense when he writes “...that you may know that you have eternal life.”? What does eternal life NOW look like? How is it different than the worldly “mortal” life lived by those in the world? (read John 17: 1-3)
4. How do we ensure God hears and answers our prayers? Why would we pray prayers which are not in keeping with God’s will? Why does God want us to pray for our brothers and sisters who have committed sins?
5. Please discuss all of the “we know’s” of this passage to make sure that we all understand the wonderful promises that God makes to us in these seven phrases.

### Further Discussion:

Why does John close this letter with “Little children, keep yourselves from idols?” What does this mean to us? Read Exodus 20:2-6, Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Matthew 22:36-38

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